1521 totals of foreign marked gold valued at Rs. 37.5 lakhs were seized at Bombay and Madras. One passenger was arrested in this connection at Bombay. In addition, contraband goods valued at Rs. 1.23 lakhs were seized and additional duty of Rs. 9.24 lakhs was collected over the average daily collections.

Cooperation amongst the member countries of SAARC

*270. SHRI RAOOF VALIULLAH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Study Groups of the first SAARC Conference had identified areas of cooperative ventures by member countries;

(b) if so, what were the areas identified and whether any major project of common interest has been launched since then or is expected to be launched before the second summit in Bangalore;

(c) whether adequate preparatory work has been done for the second summit due in November this year; and

(d) whether India propose to take the initiative to start collaborative ventures in areas like telecommunications and meteorology in which she is relatively advanced; if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. R. NARAYANAN): (a) to (d) The first South Asian Summit was held in Dhaka in December, 1985 when the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was launched and a Charter for it was adopted. Before the Summit, cooperation among the South Asian countries had been initiated under an Integrated Programme of Action adopted by the first meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the South Asian countries held in New Delhi in August, 1983. The Programme covered 9 agreed areas of cooperation:

(i) agriculture;

(ii) health and population activities;

(iii) meteorology;

(iv) postal services;

(v) rural development;

(vi) scientific and technological cooperation;

(vii) sports, arts and culture;

(viii) telecommunication; and

(ix) transport

Activities in each of the 9 areas were guided and coordinated by a Technical Committee.

Cooperation in the above areas have been mainly in the form of seminars, workshops, studies and surveys and compilations of existing capabilities in the countries of the region which can be utilised by the other countries. Technical Committees have also been examining a number of proposals for establishing regional institutions. Some of these are: Regional Meteorological Research Centre Regional Agriculture information Centre, Regional Centre for Postal Research and Development, Regional Software Centre in the field of Telecommunications networking of institutions involved in bio-gas and solar energy & Regional Centre for Tuberculosis.

At the Dhaka Summit, the Heads of State/Government decided to convene two study groups, one for exploring the possibilities of cooperation for combating terrorism in the region and the other for dealing with the problems of drug trafficking and abuse. They also decided to convene a Ministerial meeting on the role of women in development and another one for formulating a common approach to international economic issues. These two Ministerial meetings and that of the Study Group on Terrorism have already been held. Their recommendations as well as important proposals under consideration by the Technical Committees, are going to be considered at the meetings of the SAARC Standing Committee and Council of Ministers to be held in Dhaka in the second week of August.

India has played its due role in initiating proposals and implementing those allotted to it, under the aegis of SAARC. Preparatory work for the second SAARC

Summit to be held in Bangalore in November this year is proceeding satisfactorily.

Loans secured by misrepresentation of facts

*271. DR. H. P. SHARMA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item which appeared in 'Vikas Sheel Bharat' of the 1st May, 1986 published from Agra to the effect that employed persons secured loans by misrepresenting facts to the effect that they were unemployed; and

(b) if so, what action Government have taken or propose to take in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The bank is ascertaining the facts of the case and will take such remedial action as may be required.

Central Excise Duty outstanding against Bombay Tyre International Limited

*272. SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that over Rs. 12 crores is outstanding as Central excise duty against the Bombay Tyre International Limited;

(b) what are the names of the other companies where outstanding dues towards Central excise duty are more than Rs. 5 crores, stating the amount due against each of these companies at the end of March, 1984, 1985 and 1986;

(c) what are the reasons for not recovering the dues; and

(d) whether in view of their continuous default in the payment of Central excise dues Government propose to blacklist these firms and also impose restrictions in the matter of licences, issueance of shares by them and also in the matter of allotment of foreign exchange to these firms; if so, what steps have been taken by Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI): (a) Central Excise confirmed demands amounting to Rs. 13.01 crores approximately are pending against M/s. Bombay Tyre International Ltd.

(b) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(c) Many of these demands are pending because of stay orders passed by courts of law and quasi-judicial authorities.

Recovery of arrears of central excise duty is an ongoing function and such measures, administrative, legal and others, aimed at realising the arrears as are considered necessary from time to time continue to be taken.

(d) Government take into account the overall performance of companies including their tax performance while considering proposals for clearance. Approval of applications for shares, allotment of foreign exchange, etc. is given taking into consideration the existing guidelines and various other relevant factors.

Forein companies with more than 40 per cent foreign equity

*273. SHRI VISHVAJIT PRITHVIJIT SINGH:

PROF. N. M. KAMBLE:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what are the names of the foreign companies which are still having foreign equity of 40 per cent more;

(b) what is the level of foreign equity in each of these companies;

(c) what are the names of the foreign companies which have diluted their foreign equity to 40 per cent and below after the promulgation of FERA-1973 and what is their level of foreign equity at present;

(d) whether Government are considering to reduce the role of foreign companies who have diluted their foreign equity to 40 per cent and below; and